

Cultural Relativism

Outline of Lecture:

- Definition of CR
- Two implications of the definition
- The argument for CR
- Some possible objections to CR

The Definition of CR

- What is Cultural Relativism?

The Definition of CR

CR is the view that:

- There is no objective (universal) moral standard.
- Cultural consensus determines what is right (or wrong).

Implications of CR

CR implies that:

- It would be nonsensical to criticize the moral codes of other cultures.
- It would be nonsensical for cultures to debate about what counts as truly good and bad/right and wrong

The Argument for CR

Why think that Cultural Relativism is true?

The Argument for CR

Premise 1: Different cultures have different views concerning what is right and wrong.

Therefore, there is no universal (trans-cultural) moral standard that indicates what is right and wrong for all people at all times.

And because there is no trans-cultural standard, it is up to individual cultures to determine what is right for them.

Some Objections to CR

- Assuming Premise 1 is true, does the conclusion follow? Why or why not?
- Is Premise 1 even true?
- Aren't some practices, rituals, actions, etc. just plain wrong in the absolute sense?
- No moral progress within a culture